OpenWAB/Army of Ages: Open Source Tabletop Wargame Design Document

1. Summary

"OpenWAB/Army of Ages" is an ambitious open-source tabletop wargame that re-imagines the beloved but discontinued "Warhammer Ancient Battles" (WAB) and "Warhammer Historical" systems. It expands upon WAB's core historical simulation capabilities to encompass virtually *any* historical era, from prehistory to the near future, addressing the original's limited official support for only antiquity, medieval, and early modern periods. A core innovation is the transition from expensive, closed-source miniatures to a low-cost, accessible proxy model system using printed pictures on bases. This allows for truly "infinite" army lists, drawing directly from the vast tapestry of real-world historical civilizations. Beyond pure historical reenactment, OpenWAB embraces alternate history, future history, and "what if" scenarios as supplementary content, introducing speculative fiction elements missing from the original. Furthermore, it bravely ventures into non-anthropocentric battles focusing on ecological conflicts and even entirely non-combat campaigns, offering a uniquely broad and flexible wargaming experience. The game utilizes a simple yet robust d6 dice system as its core mechanic.

2. Genre

- **Tabletop Wargame:** Players command armies or forces on a battlefield, resolving actions through dice rolls and strategic positioning.
- **Historical Simulation:** Primarily focused on recreating or simulating historical conflicts and periods.
- **Alternate History / Speculative Fiction:** Incorporates "what if" scenarios, future histories, and cross-era engagements.
- **Open Source:** The rules and resources are freely available and modifiable by the community, encouraging collaborative development and expansion.

3. Theme

The overarching themes of "OpenWAB/Army of Ages" revolve around the vastness and diversity of conflict and interaction throughout time.

- **Timeless Warfare:** Exploring military tactics, leadership, and unit capabilities across all human history, from ancient skirmishes to near-future engagements.

- **The "What If":** Delving into speculative scenarios that pit forces from different eras or alternate timelines against each other, or explore hypothetical historical deviations.
- **Nature's Conflicts:** Recognizing that conflict isn't exclusive to humans, the game also embraces the brutal, awe-inspiring struggles within natural ecosystems.
- **Beyond Combat:** A unique theme is the inclusion of non-combat narratives, focusing on logistical challenges, communication, and even cultural events, expanding the definition of a "campaign."
- **Accessibility & Creativity:** Empowering players with low-cost entry and encouraging their own historical research and creative contributions through the open-source model.

4. Concept

Core Inspiration: OpenWAB builds upon the foundation of Warhammer Ancient Battles (WAB), appreciating its historical simulation strengths but removing its limitations.

Miniature Philosophy:

- **Low-Cost Proxy Models:** Instead of expensive, proprietary miniatures, players utilize readily available bases upon which they can stick printed pictures of their chosen units. These images can be sourced freely from public domain archives like Wikipedia or Wikimedia Commons, dramatically reducing the barrier to entry and fostering creative unit representation.

Era Scope:

- **Infinite Historical Eras:** The game is designed to simulate *any and all* historical eras, from the earliest prehistoric conflicts (e.g., tribal clashes, megafauna interactions) through antiquity, medieval, early modern, modern, and even near-future military engagements. This contrasts sharply with WAB's limited official period support.
- **Real-World Basis:** Army lists and unit characteristics are derived from the rich historical documentation of real-world civilizations and periods, providing a deep well of content.

Speculative & Non-Anthropocentric Scenarios:

- **Alternate History / Future History:** The game embraces "what if" scenarios and speculative engagements, allowing for cross-era battles and fictionalized historical deviations.
- **Non-Anthropocentric Battles:** Unique to OpenWAB is the ability to simulate conflicts between non-human entities, focusing on natural ecosystems and animal interactions.
- **Non-Combat Campaigns:** The system allows for scenarios that don't involve direct military confrontation, focusing on logistics, survival, and even cultural events.

Game System:

- **d6 System Core:** All core mechanics, such as movement, combat resolution, moral checks, and special abilities, are resolved using standard six-sided dice (d6). This ensures a simple, intuitive, and universally accessible dice system.

5. SRD (System Reference Document)

The OpenWAB/Army of Ages System Reference Document (SRD) would be the foundational rulebook and resource for the game, publicly available and open for community contribution. It would include:

- **Core Rules:** Detailed explanations of movement, combat (melee and ranged), morale, unit statistics, special rules, and command structure.
- **Unit Archetypes:** Generic profiles for common unit types (e.g., Light Infantry, Heavy Cavalry, Artillery, Beasts) that can be adapted for any era.
- **Terrain Rules:** Guidelines for various terrain types (forests, hills, rivers, urban areas) and their impact on gameplay.
- **Scenario Design Principles:** A framework for creating balanced and engaging scenarios, both combat and non-combat.
- **Army List Creation Guidelines:** A modular system for players to design their own historically accurate or speculative army lists, including points values and unit options.
- **Optional Rules:** Sections for more advanced or thematic rules, such as siege warfare, naval combat, air combat, and psychological warfare.
- **Licensing Information:** Clear details on the open-source license under which the game is released.

6. List of Sample Characters (Units)

Given the vast scope, "characters" in OpenWAB are typically representative units or significant individuals.

- **Prehistoric:**
    - **Tyrannosaurus Rex (Apex Predator):** High Strength, Devastating Charge, Low Model Count.
    - **Triceratops (Herd Animal):** High Toughness, Horned Charge, Group Tactics.
    - **Early Hominid Tribe (Hunter-Gatherers):** Skirmishers, Ambush Specialists, Low Morale.
- **Ancient:**
    - **Roman Legionary (Heavy Infantry):** Shield Wall, Discipline, pila Volleys.
    - **Egyptian Charioteer (Fast Cavalry):** Ranged Attack (Bow), Fast Movement, Harassment.
    - **Greek Hoplite (Phalanx):** Immovable Formation, Spear Wall.
- **Medieval:**
    - **Feudal Knight (Heavy Cavalry):** Lances, Armored Charge, Fear (Mounted).
    - **Longbowman (Ranged Infantry):** Volley Fire, Stakes, High Skill.
    - **Samurai (Elite Infantry):** Katana Skill, Bushido (Morale).
- **Early Modern:**
    - **Musketeer (Line Infantry):** Volley Fire, Bayonet Charge, Drill.
    - **Pikeman (Support Infantry):** Anti-Cavalry Formation, Static Defense.
    - **Janissary (Elite Guard):** Disciplined Fire, Fierce Melee.
- **Modern:**
    - **Infantry Squad (Modern Infantry):** Fire and Maneuver, Small Arms Fire, Cover.
    - **Tank Platoon (Armored Vehicle):** Heavy Armor, Main Gun, Suppression.
    - **Sniper Team (Specialist Infantry):** Precision Shots, Stealth, Objective Capture.
- **Near Future:**
    - **Powered Armor Trooper (Exo-Suit Infantry):** Enhanced Strength, Integrated Weapons, Durability.
    - **Drone Swarm (Automated Units):** Autonomous Attack, Overwhelm, Reconnaissance.
    - **Cybernetic Commando (Elite Operative):** Advanced Optics, Enhanced Reflexes, Infiltrate.

- **Alternate/Ecological:**
    - **Confederate Ironclad (Naval Vessel):** Iron Hull, Cannon Broadside.
    - **U-Boat (Submarine):** Stealth, Torpedoes, Wolfpack Tactics.
    - **Carcharodontosaurus (Apex Predator):** Rend, Ferocious Bite, Territory Defense.
    - **Paraceratherium (Colossal Herbivore):** Indomitable Mass, Stomp, Grazer.
    - **American Alligator (Amphibious Predator):** Ambush, Death Roll, Aquatic Movement.
    - **Burmese Python (Constrictor):** Constriction, Surprise Attack, Resilience.

7. List of Sample Settings

The game's scope allows for an incredibly diverse range of battlefields and environments.

- **Prehistoric:**
    - **Kem Kem Beds, Late Cretaceous North Africa:** A lush, swampy environment dominated by large rivers and dense vegetation.
    - **Pleistocene Steppe-Tundra, Beringia:** Vast, open grasslands with scattered coniferous forests and frozen rivers.
- **Ancient:**
    - **Thermopylae Pass, Greece (480 BCE):** A narrow coastal pass with steep mountains on one side and the sea on the other.
    - **The Nile Delta, Egypt (1274 BCE):** Flat, fertile plains crisscrossed by canals and irrigation ditches, near the Mediterranean coast.
- **Medieval:**
    - **Agincourt Battlefield, France (1415 CE):** A muddy, churned-up field flanked by dense woods.
    - **Kyoto, Japan (Sengoku Period):** Urban skirmishes through narrow streets, fortified temples, and wooden buildings.
- **Early Modern:**
    - **Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA (1863 CE):** Rolling farmlands, orchards, and rocky outcrops, with key hills dominating the landscape.
    - **Napoleonic Era European Plains:** Open, often gently rolling terrain, perfect for grand maneuvers of infantry and cavalry lines.
- **Modern:**

    - **Vietnamese Jungle (Vietnam War):** Dense, humid jungle, thick undergrowth, hidden trails, and occasional clearings.
    - **Stalingrad, Russia (WWII):** Devastated urban landscape, bombed-out buildings, rubble, and industrial zones.
- **Near Future:**
    - **Neo-Tokyo Cyberpunk Slums:** Densely packed multi-level structures, neon-lit alleyways, elevated walkways, and scattered tech-waste.
    - **Martian Colony Outpost:** Red, dusty, rocky terrain with scattered biodomes, solar arrays, and exploration vehicles.
- **Alternate/Ecological:**
    - **Post-Apocalyptic Urban Ruins:** Overgrown cityscapes, collapsed highways, and derelict buildings serving as cover.
    - **Deep Ocean Trench:** Submarine environment with limited visibility, pressure variations, and unique geological features.
    - **Amazon Rainforest Basin:** An incredibly dense, humid environment with towering trees, hidden waterways, and diverse wildlife.

8. List of Sample Scenarios

OpenWAB's versatility allows for a wide array of scenarios, both combat and non-combat.

- **Combat Scenarios:**
    - **U-Boat Wolfpack (World War I) vs. Confederate Navy (American Civil War):**
        - **Setting:** Atlantic Ocean, foggy conditions.
        - **Forces:** German U-Boats (several) vs. Confederate Ironclads and a few Wooden Frigates.
        - **Objective:** U-Boats attempt to sink Confederate vessels; Confederates try to survive and potentially destroy the U-Boats if they surface. Focus on stealth, torpedo runs, and early naval technology confrontation.
    - **Oda Nobunaga's Oda Clan (Sengoku Japan) vs. Cao Cao's Cao Wei (Three Kingdoms China):**
        - **Setting:** A large, open plain with a strategic hill in the center, simulating a "clash of titans" from different Asian historical contexts.

        - **Forces:** Oda Clan (Ashigaru with firearms, Samurai cavalry, disciplined infantry) vs. Cao Wei (heavy cavalry, crossbowmen, skilled strategists, chariots).
        - **Objective:** Classic pitched battle, seeking to break the enemy's morale or destroy key units. Focus on comparing military doctrines and technologies from different eras.
    - **Tyrannosaurus Rex vs. Triceratops & Ankylosaurus:**
        - **Setting:** A prehistoric forest clearing with a watering hole.
        - **Forces:** One T-Rex vs. a Triceratops and an Ankylosaurus.
        - **Objective:** T-Rex seeks to take down one of the herbivores; the herbivores try to defend themselves and escape or deter the predator. Focus on unique creature abilities, territoriality, and survival.
    - **Kem Kem Beds Unnamed Titanosaur vs. Carcharodontosaurus:**
        - **Setting:** Riverside oasis in the Kem Kem Beds.
        - **Forces:** A large Titanosaur vs. a Carcharodontosaurus.
        - **Objective:** The Carcharodontosaurus attempts to ambush and bring down the Titanosaur; the Titanosaur attempts to defend itself and escape. Focus on the raw power and predatory instincts of megafauna.
    - **Hyaenodon Pack vs. Paraceratherium:**
        - **Setting:** Early Cenozoic plains, with scattered rock formations for cover.
        - **Forces:** A pack of Hyaenodons vs. a lone Paraceratherium.
        - **Objective:** The Hyaenodon pack attempts to coordinate and overwhelm the massive Paraceratherium; the Paraceratherium tries to fend off the attackers or find refuge. Focus on pack hunting tactics against a solitary giant.
    - **American Alligator vs. Burmese Python:**
        - **Setting:** Florida Everglades, swampy terrain with dense reeds and murky water.
        - **Forces:** One large American Alligator vs. one large Burmese Python.
        - **Objective:** A territorial dispute or predatory encounter. Focus on the unique combat styles of these reptiles – the alligator's bite force and death roll vs. the python's constriction.
- **Non-Combat Campaigns:**
    - **Escape from the Sinking of the Titanic:**

        - **Setting:** Sections of the RMS Titanic as it sinks.
        - **Forces:** Groups of passengers (e.g., wealthy, steerage, crew) with varying skills and access.
        - **Objective:** Players attempt to guide their group of passengers to safety, navigating flooded corridors, limited lifeboats, and moral dilemmas. Focus on resource management, decision-making under pressure, and character-driven narrative.
    - **Pony Express: Send Mail from One State to Another:**
        - **Setting:** A long stretch of the American Frontier, with various way stations.
        - **Forces:** Pony Express riders, station managers, occasional hostile elements (bandits, Native Americans).
        - **Objective:** Successfully deliver a series of important mail pouches from one end of the map to the other within a time limit, overcoming environmental hazards, exhaustion, and potential ambushes. Focus on logistics, endurance, and navigation.
    - **Field Kitchen Manager in the Vietnam War:**
        - **Setting:** A remote U.S. Army field kitchen in a jungle firebase.
        - **Forces:** The kitchen manager and their small team.
        - **Objective:** Keep the troops fed and morale high amidst challenging conditions – managing supplies, dealing with equipment breakdowns, avoiding enemy harassment, and adapting to unexpected events (e.g., bad weather, supply interruptions). Focus on resource management, problem-solving, and non-military support roles.
    - **Historical Concert (e.g., The Beatles at Shea Stadium, 1965):**
        - **Setting:** A large stadium packed with fans.
        - **Forces:** The band members, road crew, security personnel, enthusiastic audience members.
        - **Objective:** Successfully stage the concert – managing crowd control, sound equipment, timing, and unexpected incidents (e.g., stage invaders, technical glitches). Focus on event management, coordination, and capturing the atmosphere of a significant cultural moment.
    - **Pirate Radio Operations (e.g., Off the Coast of England, 1960s):**
        - **Setting:** A makeshift radio station on a ship or offshore platform.
        - **Forces:** A small crew of DJs, technicians, and potentially engineers.

- **Objective:** Maintain broadcast operations, evade authorities, manage equipment failures, and keep the station on air while dealing with interpersonal conflicts and isolation. Focus on technical challenges, evasion, and cultural impact.